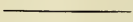


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OUR DUTY IN DANGER.



SPEECH

OF

THE REV. CANON HOLE

OF CAUNTON MANOR, NEWARK,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING



OF THE

CHURCH DEFENCE INSTITUTION

ON MONDAY, JULY 9, 1883.

“In what place, therefore, ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither: our God shall fight for us.”—NEHEMIAH iv. 20.



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OUR DUTY IN DANGER.

At the Annual Meeting of the Church Defence Institution, held at the National Society's House on July 9th, 1883, the Right Hon. H. Cecil Raikes, M.P., having moved, "That in view of the good work already done by the Church Defence Institution in setting before the people of this country the true position, history, and value of the Established Church, as also of the continued agitation in furtherance of the Disestablishment movement, this meeting is of opinion that the Church Defence Institution is deserving of the hearty support of Churchmen":—

The REV. CANON HOLE, in supporting the resolution, said:—My lord, ladies, and gentlemen,—I know no Society connected with the Church which is so honourably patronised (on paper), and which has such large sympathies (verbal) from our brethren, whatever may be their longitude or latitude, their height or their depth, in other regions of thought—I do not know any institution which has been so slightly scorched by the vitriol or smeared with the treacle of criticism, and yet has received so small a share of that general practical support which everybody says it so well deserves—as the Church Defence Institution. It is the old story of the man who had great facility in expressing his commiseration when any neighbour was in trouble—"no one knew how much he felt for him"—until he was silenced by the Quaker's inquiry, "Friend, hast thou felt for him in thy pocket?" That little drop of biting acid exposed the base metal beneath the superficial plating, and the coarse wood was visible through the gaps of the thin veneer. A society has been formed to deprive the Church of its national position and of its ancient property. The process is called "liberation," and closely resembles that form of procedure by which, some century ago, the traveller on the lone heath of Hounslow was liberated of his purse; and this society, we are told, has an income of 10,000*l.* a year and agents in every part of the country; whereas the Society organised in defence of the Church of England has an income of 4,000*l.* only.

Why is it so? There are certain elderly ladies and gentlemen who seem never to recognise the proximity of an omnibus until the pole is parallel with their right ear. And there are, unhappily, a large number of people in the Church of England who will not believe in danger because there is no uproar in their own street. If there be any peril, it is a long way from them; and why should they be afraid? They have all the

courage of the absentee landlord, who wrote from his cosy club in London to his Irish agent, "Don't let them suppose for a moment that by shooting you they will in the least degree intimidate me." But only wilful blindness, or mean selfish apathy, only the heart waxed gross, and the ear dull of hearing, can ignore the peril.

Some say, "We are fully aware of all these schemes of attack, but we have too much faith to fear. It is not a matter for a Society, for circulars and subscriptions. The ark of the Church may seem to travel unsteadily at times over the rough places of the world, but woe to Uzzah if he put forth his hand to touch it! Will not God maintain His own cause? Is it not written of His Church, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that is raised against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.' You cannot disestablish the truth, the faith once delivered to the saints. You cannot disendow those unsearchable riches which empower men to say, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' The Church has not been for generations so strong, so full of energetic zeal, as now. Let each go on working in his own sphere of duty and all will be well."

We know that He will maintain His own cause; but it will be through human agency, and you and I may promote or hinder it. Proofs come to us from time to time—signal indications—it may be when we least hoped for them, as on two recent occasions,* that He will not allow His truth to fail; but they follow work and prayer. And work and prayer, without which faith is dead, being alone, have no parochial bounds. It is with us Christians building up a spiritual house, restoring the old waste places, renewing that which has been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, as with the Jews in the days of Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem. It was not only that they which builded on the walls and which bore burdens wrought every one with one of his hands in the work and with the other held a weapon; it was not only that every man did the work assigned to him; but because the work was great and large, and they were separated on the wall far from one another they were commanded in what place they should hear the sound of the trumpet to resort thither. And it is so with us. We are not only to do our own work, but we are to be ready to march to the relief of others. So we of the Church are summoned to unite and repel the enemy, ever changing his place

* The rejection of the Bills for Abolition of Oaths, and for Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

and method of attack ; and, as in our army the different regiments are trained and armed for the various emergencies of war, and are not only taught in the barrack each soldier his duty, but are massed together in the camp that they may know how to act in unison, so must we not only be valiant and stand fast, and quit us like men, and be strong wherever we are placed, but we must be ready to march to support the weak when the cry is raised, "Come over and help us." Wherefore, it must be the plain duty of faithful soldiers, pledged to contend earnestly for the faith, to support institutions such as this ; and the maintenance of that faith is a matter of subscriptions and societies. For societies like this not only notify the presence of the enemy and the points of his attack, but, having made his stratagems a special study, they can explain them to those who are ignorant of his devices. And they know how to confound and defeat him if they be duly supplied with the munitions of war.

As to the argument that you cannot disestablish and disendow the truth, or destroy Divine institutions, they who use it seem to disregard the very awful witness of history that, though the Church itself is imperishable, Churches may fall, like stars from the firmament. It is impossible to destroy the true Vine ; but vineyards have disappeared because the phylloxera of sin was at their roots. And suppose that the Church of England, disestablished and disendowed, were still to retain all which she values most, and were ultimately to acquire an influence more truly national than she had ever known in the hearts of the people, what should we anticipate meanwhile—a blessing or a curse—upon those who deliberately reject not only the system but the main principles of Christianity? And during that process of recovery the mere thought is intolerable of the desolation and distress which would ensue in countless places where there would be no public worship, no means of grace, no true consolation in pain. What would become of the poor of England? At this moment there is hardly a village in the land in which there is not a man ready to answer the first call of sickness and sorrow—to minister to the souls and bodies of the poorest, and minister as lovingly as to the noble, as to the rich, to advise in perplexity, to relieve in want. Yet a system which brings to almost every home this sympathy and help is to be disestablished, and the estate which supports it is to be disendowed.

And when we, whose privilege it is not only to preach the Gospel to the poor, but to realise its Divine obligations by sharing their distress, by visiting the fatherless and widow in their affliction, by comforting those who are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God—

when we protest against our eviction, which is intended if it is not avowed, we are accused of seeking worldly influence, of gratifying our vanity, of desiring to lord it over God's heritage, and a cry is raised of priestcraft and sacerdotal pretension. "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." Priests we are, and priests we shall be until an Œcumenical Council rearranges the forms of Church government in Christendom. But, surely, there is no craft, no pious fraud, nor personal pride, in defending that which has been committed to our trust, not only as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, but as guardians of the children and trustees of the property of the Church. (Hear, hear.)

Then they accuse us of political bias, and they say that we want to meddle with the Legislature. My own experience—and it has been somewhat large—has been that I never heard of a Bishop or an Archdeacon or of a dignitary of the Church advising his younger brethren to take a side in politics. I believe that there are a great many men who, like myself, would have considerable difficulty in answering the question, "What is your political designation?" I believe that the Clergy honestly criticise measures and appointments, if they criticise them at all, and that they criticise without reference to the political opinions of those who make them; and, therefore, it does seem to me a little hard that if, having votes, we use them, or if, having strong convictions, we express them, that we should be thus censured. It seems to me a little hard that Bishops and Clergy should be described in the newspapers and delineated in *Punch* as old women. And I must say that some of my dear friends, the laymen, seem to me to think that we, who, when we were at the University with them, held our own not only on the stream and on the sward, and over the stone walls and the brooks, but in the schools, upon taking orders took leave of our virility and of our physical and mental power. I think it is still more hard to expect us not to make a little demonstration when things which we feel of most vital interest are not going as we think they should—not only to behave like that brave Spartan lad who smiled when the fox was gnawing away under his garment, but to superintend cheerfully our own *hari kari*. It reminds me of a very clever burlesque I once read upon the foolish, high-flown, over-wrought style of our modern novel-writers, in which the hero, when about to be thrown from a very tall tower, was particularly requested, if he had any remark to make upon the proceeding, to make it in a whisper, because there was a wood-pigeon sitting on two eggs in a tree contiguous to the place of execution. (Laughter and cheers.)

They say, moreover, that our notions are antiquated. Well, our notions are antiquated, because the truth is ancient and immutable. They say that we are opposed to the genius of the age. The religion of the Cross and of self-denial, purity, and hard work, always was opposed to the genius of the age. They say we are opposing civilisation. I have never met with a satisfactory definition of civilisation; but, if it means mere knowledge, then the power of civilisation to do away with war, and to lessen suffering, and to promote the happiness of the people at large, has yet to be proved. They say that we are opposed to science. There is no class of men who so admire science as we Christians of the Church, because we know that in the end it must endorse, as it always has done, the statements of Revelation. They say that we are obsolete and moribund. "In the beginning was the Word;" and the Word has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Then it is said that not only should minorities give way to majorities, but that, as the temporal power is supreme, we should never seem to come into contact or opposition with it. They say that while in all other arguments and difficulties people are ready to make concessions, we, of the Church, are always obstinate. It is because we have to defend that which is not ours to concede--because we are told to buy the truth, and get understanding, and get wisdom, for all the things that we can desire are not to be compared with it—but sell it not. We cannot concede one jot or one tittle when we appeal to the law and the testimony, because we feel that if one link is taken from the chain which binds us to the shore of eternal truth, we may drift into unknown seas. They ask us to make a breach in our own citadel; and they know, while they ask, that, so long as we can keep the bank of the reservoir intact, the great water-flood shall not come nigh us; but when there is a fissure or an opening—and especially if we put out a hand to make it—it will be as when one letteth out water; and who shall stem the tide? (Hear, hear.)

We cannot make a concession. A very simple old man in my village had a wild and vicious cow, and she ran Her Majesty's lieges who went upon the pathway of the field. In reply to their remonstrances, the owner of the cow fastened a piece of sacking over the animal's eyes. A man told me—and "he stands in the *comitium* to witness if I lie," that is, he lives in the county of Nottingham—this man told me that he remarked to the owner of the cow, as he passed through the field, that it was a great pity that the poor animal could not see to drink in a pond hard by; and, when he returned, the benevolent owner

had cut a small hole in the sacking over the animal's right eye. My lord, was this concession a success? Did this compromise ensure a lasting peace? Did the cow honourably conform with the intentions of her benevolent master? On the contrary, she abused her freedom. She abused the first opportunity she had of exercising it, by charging the man who had proposed it, and running him out of the field. (Laughter and cheers.)

My lord, ladies, and gentlemen, pardon me if I seem to go too abruptly "from grave to gay, from lively to severe;" for, indeed, I speak every word from my heart; and what I mean is that, in following the things that make for peace, as our duty is as Christians, and especially as ministers, let us never be deceived by that vile counterfeit which means apathy, cowardice, surrender, "*Miseram pacem vel bello beno mutari.*" "They make a desert, and they call it peace." We are attacked, and we must repel our assailants; and our defence must be organised, because we are fighting against trained troops. And I do not know how we can have a better organisation than this of the Church Defence Institution. To its vigilance we owe in a large degree the appraisals of our danger—the lighting of the beacon; and through its wise, observant, and courageous zeal we know the weak parts of the enemy's line as well as we know the injustice of his claim. We are forewarned of the invasion, and we are forearmed to repel it. (Cheers.)

The Church Defence Institution has had great success. "Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam." We have our commander-in-chief at our head, and we have more than thirty bishops to support him, with noble men having noble hearts who feel that,

Not to the past, but to the future, looks true nobility,
And finds its blazon in posterity—

with tried and trusted champions of the Faith—men whose praise is in the Churches for their loyalty and zeal. And let me ask—and I know that I shall have it—special praise and special sympathy for those men who have gone almost single-handed to attack the vantage-ground of the enemy, and have not only disturbed but in some cases dispersed him.* But, in spite of all those auspices and of this aid, there is still great work to be done. "The agitation against the union of the Church and State is still kept alive by parties who, for various reasons, are interested in its dissolution;"† a large amount of misrepresentation is continuously published with regard to the principles and the rights

* I mean such men as Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. Helm, and Mr. W. H. Mason.

† See Report for 1882-3.

of the Church ; Bills to impede her progress, to weaken her authority ; to evade her laws, are constantly brought before Parliament, in the next Session a motion is to be submitted in favour of disestablishment ;* and, therefore, my lords, and ladies and gentlemen, thanking you for your kind and patient sympathy, I beg to support the resolution. (Loud cheers.)

* **THE DISESTABLISHMENT QUESTION.**—At the Liberation Society's recent triennial conference it was resolved that, in view of recent occurrences within the English Church Establishment, and of the advanced state of public opinion, the question of disestablishment should be raised in the House of Commons in the present Parliament. Since then the Executive Committee have decided on the expediency of submitting a motion in favour of the disestablishment of the Church of England in the course of next Session ; and have requested Mr. Richard, M.P., to give notice thereof before the close of the present Session, which he has consented to do. This motion will be in addition to those relating to Scotland and Wales, of which notice has been given by Mr. Peddie and Mr. Dillwyn. Arrangements are being made for a vigorous agitation in support of the several motions during the recess.—Daily Papers, July 1883.

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Being a Speech made by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Annual Meeting of the Church Defence Institution, July 9, 1883. Price 1*d.*

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